

## Home Circle.

### HIS SON'S WIFE.

I tell you I don't want any startled-up fine ladies flouncing their silks and laces round me. I've been an honest working-man all my life, and I'll die as I lived, in my own little home, where I'm free to do as I like. They can keep their patronage to themselves."

"I don't believe for a moment that your son John and his wife have any such thought as patronage, Mr. Green," said the minister's wife. "Now that he has a home of his own, it is only natural that they should think of you in your loneliness, and want you to share their comfort."

"Ah, well, I've said, 'No, thank 'ee,' and I mean to stick to it. If John had took to him some good, simple, country girl, it might have been different; but he says 'she's quite a lady,' and had a bit of money of her own, as well.' That's enough for me. Your grand city madams I never could abide, and so I told him plainly."

Mrs. Goddard thought it a sad story that the solitary old man should thus, from pure prejudice against his son's wife, whom he had never seen, and an overstrained notion of independence, thus cut himself off from just that care and attendance that his increasing infirmities needed, especially as she knew that John Green was a good and dutiful son, who, in begging his father to go and live beneath his roof, undoubtedly meant to do all in his power to make the old gentleman happy. But to argue with Ezekiel Green was, she had learned by experience about as useful as knocking one's head against a stone wall, so she bade him "good morning," and came away.

The weeks passed on. The east winds of early spring laid the old man aside with a more than usually severe attack of rheumatism, and it was not until June's sunshine warmed the air that he was able to venture once more to the house of God.

As he was coming along the churchyard path at the conclusion of the service, he accidentally dropped his stick, and was vainly trying to bend his stiffened limbs to pick it up, when it was placed in his knotted fingers by a daintily gloved hand, and a sweet girlish voice said, "Won't you take my arm? You would get along better; and I believe we both go the same way."

Looking up, he met the gaze of a pair of soft, compassionate eyes, whose unaffected sympathy it was impossible to doubt. Their owner was a tastefully dressed young lady, quite unlike an ordi-

nary village girl, such as Ezekiel was accustomed to see about him.

"Thank 'ee, miss, very kindly," replied the old man; but I'm bound to admit I don't know your face."

"Don't you?" said the girl, slightly bushing. "But I know you. My name is Grace Worsdell. I am staying at Kose Cottage for the benefit of my health, and my landlady mentioned to me how ill you had been."

"Oh, Rose Cottage, eh? Ah, somebody told me there was a young lady from New York stopping there. Well, miss, it's very kind of you to think of an old man like me. But it does sort of pull one over the ground to have an arm to lean on, and that I'm bound to say."

"I'll call for you every Sunday, if you will let me," said Grace: "I have to pass your house as I come to church."

Again Mr. Green said "thank 'ee." It was wonderfully pleasant to be taken care of after all. And the young lady was true to her word. From calling for the old man on Sundays, grew the habit of taking him out for a little walk on fine weekdays as well; and out of this, again, Grace developed a custom of running in on wet mornings to beguile the dull hours by reading to her aged friend a chapter in the Bible or a few pages from some interesting magazine.

"It is very good of you, miss, to do so much for a poor old man like me," he said, quite tenderly, one day. I can't quite understand it at all; it seems too much."

"We can't feel anything too much, or even much at all," returned the girl, in a low voice, "to do for one another, when we think of all the Lord Jesus has done for us. He lived for us, and died for us, and only asks us, in our poor way, to try and be a little bit like Him. But there is another reason," she added—"my grandfather, Jacob Worsdell, lived and was buried somewhere about here, and I felt I should like to get friendly with some of the same sort of people he had known and loved. My grandfather was a good man."

"Indeed he was!" cried Mr. Green. "He is talked of hereabout, and his memory respected to this day. So you are Jacob Worsdell's grandchild! Ah, that explains a great deal."

Inwardly, he added, "Oh that my John would have chosen for his wife some such good, God-fearing girl as this from an honest, country stock! I might have made my home with her."

Later on in that same day there came brisk footsteps up the little path that led to Ezekiel's cottage, followed by a great rapping at the door. Slowly the old man rose, and with difficulty hobbled across

the room to open it. As he went along, he thought he heard voices, and something very like subdued laughter outside. But when he opened the door and looked out, he saw but one person standing there, and that was—his son John!

"Why, Jack, my boy," said the old man, as the tall young fellow bent and kissed him—as he had never ceased to do since his childhood—"I never thought to see you. I said to myself, 'He's too much took up with his fine ladywife to remember his poor old father.' I oughter know you better, Jack! But why didn't you say you were coming?"

"I thought I'd give you a little surprise father," John replied. He was still standing half across the threshold, as though hesitating to enter; but his manly face was covered with smiles.

"Well, come in, son; come in!" said Ezekiel.

"I've brought my wife to see you!" said the young man. "Here, Gracie, you puss, where are you hiding?"

And from behind a rosebush at the side of the house, peeped a sweet, merry face, red as a rose itself with blushes—the face of Ezekiel's girl friend, Grace Worsdell!

"Forgive me, father!" she coaxingly said, coming and laying her hand upon the old man's arm. "But I knew if I first of all appeared as John's wife, you and I might never get to really know each other. And I *did* need country air and I *did* want to see grandfather's home and my name is Grace Worsdell, only it is something else as well, and—"

But her pretty, pleading lips were closed with a kiss.

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"I often think," said Ezekiel Green years after, when his grandchildren played around his knee, 'of what my son's wife once said to me about the Lord commanding us to be like Him. It's little enough I really tried at that time, though I'd called myself a Christian for over forty years, or I should never have set myself against her. But she did; she took Him for her pattern, and came to seek the hard hearted old sinner who was too proud to seek her, and to bring him the love and comfort that was waiting for him. I don't forget it, bless her bright eyes; no more will He.'"

### LADIES

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